

Response to Office Action Mailed May 16, 2007

A. Claims In The Case

Claims 1-12 have been rejected. Claim 1 has been amended. Claims 1-12 are pending in the case.

B. The Claims Are Not Anticipated By The Cited Art Pursuant To 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-12 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,908,432 to Pan ("Pan"). Applicant respectfully disagrees with these rejections.

Claim 1 describes a combination of features including but not limited to the following features:

the scalpel handle being molded as a single piece molding with an integral bridge defining an endless collar encircling the open end of the cavity through which the blade carrier may be introduced into the cavity

Applicant submits that Pan does not appear to teach or suggest this feature, in combination with the other features of claim 1.

In the Office Action the Examiner appears to equate end (24) of Pan with Applicant's endless collar (10). Applicant submits that end (24) of Pan is not an endless collar. Referring to FIG. 2 of Pan, it can be seen that the end of the scalpel includes a door (48) that is movable from an open position to a closed position. End (24) which includes door (48) (see FIG. 8), is not endless as door 48 forms a break in the end (24). Additionally, as depicted in FIG. 8, end (24) of Pan includes slots which separate the end into individual sections that are not continuous.

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10/749,691

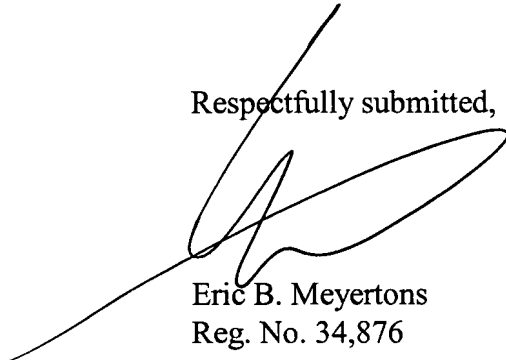
Applicant submits that the feature of an "endless collar" in combination with the other features of independent claim 1, are not taught or suggested by Pan.

D. Summary

Based on the above, Applicant submits that all claims are now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

If any extension of time is required, Applicant hereby requests the appropriate extension of time. If any fees are inadvertently omitted or if any additional fees are required, please charge those fees to Meyertons, Hood, Kivlin, Kowert & Goetzel, P.C. Deposit Account Number 50-1505/5991-00700/EBM

Respectfully submitted,



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